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Kirkstall Labour News

Re-Elect Councillor Fiona Venner in May Council Election

Fiona Venner will be standing to be re- elected for Labour at the council elections on 2nd May 2024. Fiona has been a Kirkstall Labour Councillor since 2014 and lives in the heart of the ward. Fiona is also the Executive Board (Cabinet) Member for Children's Social Care and Health Partnerships at the council and has previously also been responsible for Adult Social Care. Since she became a cabinet member in 2019, Fiona has been a full time councillor. Prior to this, Fiona worked in front line mental health services (mainly crisis services) for 25 years and was the Chief Executive of mental health charity Leeds Survivor Led Crisis Service for 15 years.

Fiona's career has been spent supporting some of the most vulnerable people in our city and she is strong and passionate advocate for the Kirkstall Ward. Fiona's successes as a Councillor include getting Clayton Grange and Heights high rise blocks refurbished, leading the campaign for the new playgrounds on West Park fields and Wolsley Road and getting new zebra crossings installed on Queenswood Drive and Spen Lane. Fiona loves cats and dogs and is often seen running in the grounds of Kirkstall Abbey with her neighbours' dog, Dookie, who is her running coach and election mascot.

Vote Fiona in May and Keep Leeds Labour!

Support your local Food Project!

The St Andrew's and St Mary's Food Project is based at St Andrew's Church on Butcher Hill and supports anyone in the Kirkstall ward who needs help. The amazing volunteer team who work there feed hundreds of families every week through the provision of food parcels and a food bank at St Andrew's Church every Friday morning.

To make a referral call Cherie 07731 346988.

You can donate food at St Andrew's Church on Friday morning. To donate money, use the QR code (right).

Scan the QR code or visit http://tinyurl.com/4da8nwwk

You can make a one-off donation or set up a regular payment.

Please help this fantastic service to support our community.

New Playgrounds in Kirkstall Ward

The Kirkstall Councillors were delighted to be at the official opening of the new playground on West Park fields. A joint project with the Weetwood Labour Councillors; we had campaigned for this for many years due to a lack of play facilities in the area for small children. We have also recently redesigned the playground behind the former Rising Sun Pub, which now boasts new equipment, flooring and fencing to make it safer for children and families.

Kirkstall Labour Councillors are passionate about children's access to green space to play and have fun to benefit their mental health and wellbeing. We also know how important it is to have local facilities that families can walk to, especially in a cost-of-living and environmental crisis.

As the Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Fiona is also leading the development of children's play across Leeds City Council who are developing a 'play sufficiency strategy.' Leeds is leading the way by being the first city in England to commit to delivering an action plan, designed to increase play opportunities for children and young people across the city.

Kirkstall and Weetwood Labour Councillors at the West Park fields playground

Priorities include the creation of streets that are safe and increasing access to green spaces and nature-based play for children.

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New Crossing Point, Kirkstall Ward

Kirkstall Councillors are happy to report that after years of campaigning by councillors and community members a crossing point has been installed at the junction of Spen Lane, Morris Lane and Vesper Road. This has been requested many times by local residents and will make crossing at this point much safer. Even with reduced finances Leeds Labour are committed to making roads safer for pedestrians and drivers. Please contact us if there are any other areas in the ward you are concerned about and feel could be improved.

Fiona & Dookie at the new crossing

Labour will solve the Housing Crisis

As your local Councillors, we are consistently working on your behalf, but never before have we each had so much casework about housing. It is endless. Our community are really suffering the ill effects of Right To Buy which allows council tenants to buy their homes at a heavily discounted price. This takes away social housing and until recently government policy has prevented Councils from spending the money raised in this way from being spent on new Council housing.

This, teamed with the rise in landlords charging ridiculous prices and being able to force no fault evictions, is leaving us in a desperate place with homelessness. Home owners are also suffering under this Tory government with the increase in mortgage rates

As well as supporting people who are in urgent need of housing or rehousing; we are working hard advocating for residents to get quicker fixes for their repairs and issues in our houses. In order to make sure this happens, it is really important that you report repairs to Kirkstall Housing, or your housing association or landlord as soon as you notice them. Housing, like every other part of the council, is struggling financially from government cuts to council funding. We will, however, always support you to get the assistance you need. Please make sure you get in touch using the details at the bottom of this leaflet. Please contact us if you need help or advice about keeping your home warm this winter. We have a range of resources available, including the Green Doctor, a service run by Groundworks who support people to reduce their energy usage.

It isn't all bad news though, your Labour council are investing in our housing stock, with new roofs going on properties in the Woodbridge area soon and heat pumps and insulation being installed in some of our high-rise blocks. An incoming Labour Government will prioritise the biggest social and council house building programme in a generation. Labour in power would also abolish Section 21 evictions meaning landlords cannot ask tenants to leave under 'no fault' evictions.

Visit Hawksworth Hub

Leeds City Council has set up a network of Community Hubs across the city with a wide range of services all under one roof. As well as enabling people to obtain many services from one place close to home, this 'One Stop Shop' approach helps the Council to make the best use of our buildings and keeps costs down. There's a Community Hub in our ward, on the Hawksworth Estate. Andy visited recently to learn from the staff there about the services they provide.

Andy says

"Despite its small size the Hawksworth Hub offers a wide range of services. The computers there are free to use – you can log into the Council's online facilities, or just use the internet to search for information. The Hub also provides a 'Job Shop' service – staff can give advice on finding a new job or help with updating a CV. Council tenants can also use the Hub to report anything that needs a repair or meet one of the Housing Officers. It's good to have all these options close at hand."

For more details of services available at Hawksworth Community Hub, check the Council website (search 'Hawksworth Hub') or just drop in at 6 Broadway LS5 3PR. The Hub is open 9am-5pm each weekday except Tuesday when opening time is at 10am.

Councillor and MP surgeries and contact details

The Kirkstall Councillors have two surgeries per month alongside food banks in the ward.

We are at St Matthias Church, Burley Road, on the second Tuesday of every month 10-12 and St Andrew's Church, Butcher Hill, on the fourth Friday of every month 10-12.

St Matthias Church (also known as St Matt's as this is the name of the congregation that worships there) is facing onto Burley Road between St Matthias Street and Wolsley Road. The surgery is in the parish centre, which is behind the church and down a long ramp.

If you would like to see us away from these times or venues, you can contact us on the details opposite and we will either deal with your query by phone or email, or arrange to meet you in a public place.

Cllr Fiona Venner 07749 551732
fiona.venner@leeds.gov.uk

Cllr Andy Rontree 07733 206373
andy.rontree@leeds.gov.uk

Cllr Hannah Bithell 07717 415471
Hannah.bithell@leeds.gov.uk

If you wish to contact our **MP, Rachel Reeves**, her office number is 0113 255 2311.
Email rachel.reeves.mp@parliament.uk

Follow the Kirkstall Councillors' page on Facebook facebook.com/KirkstallCouncillors

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